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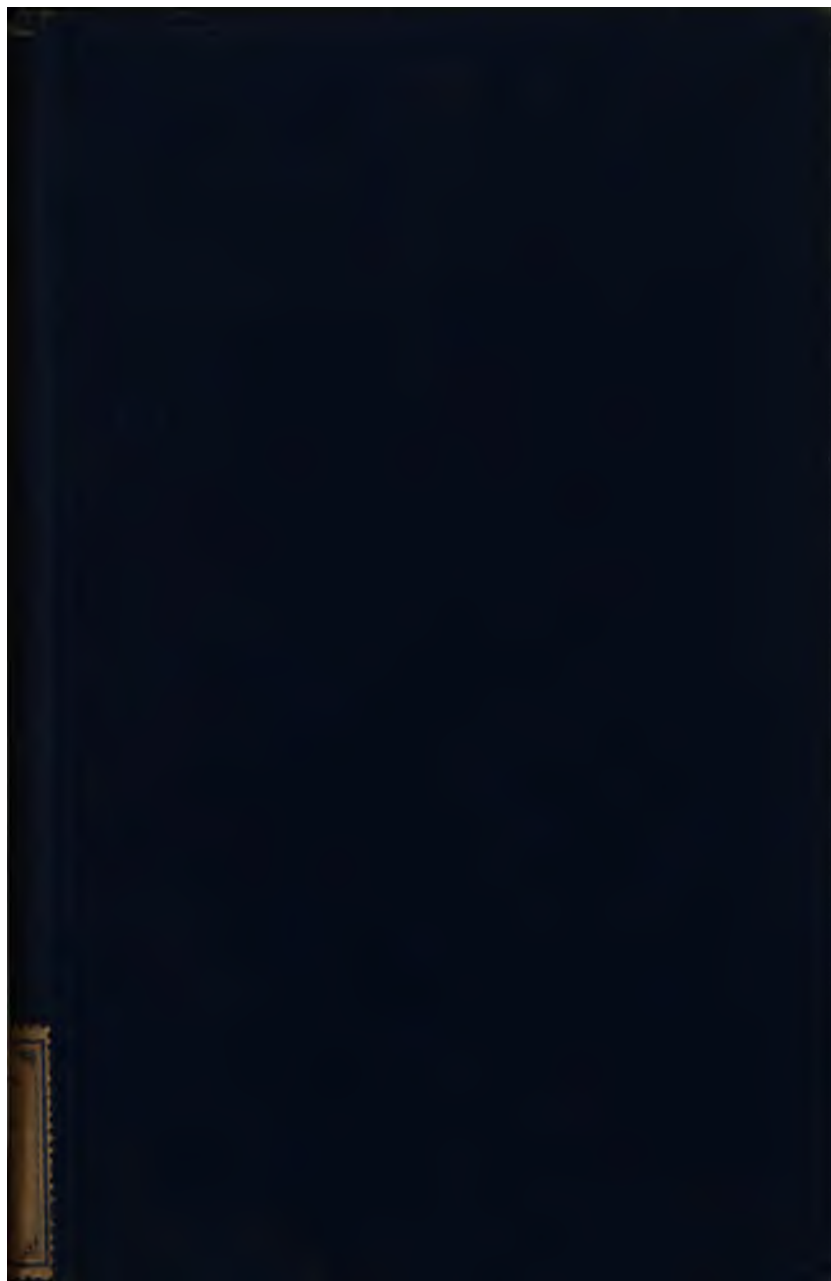
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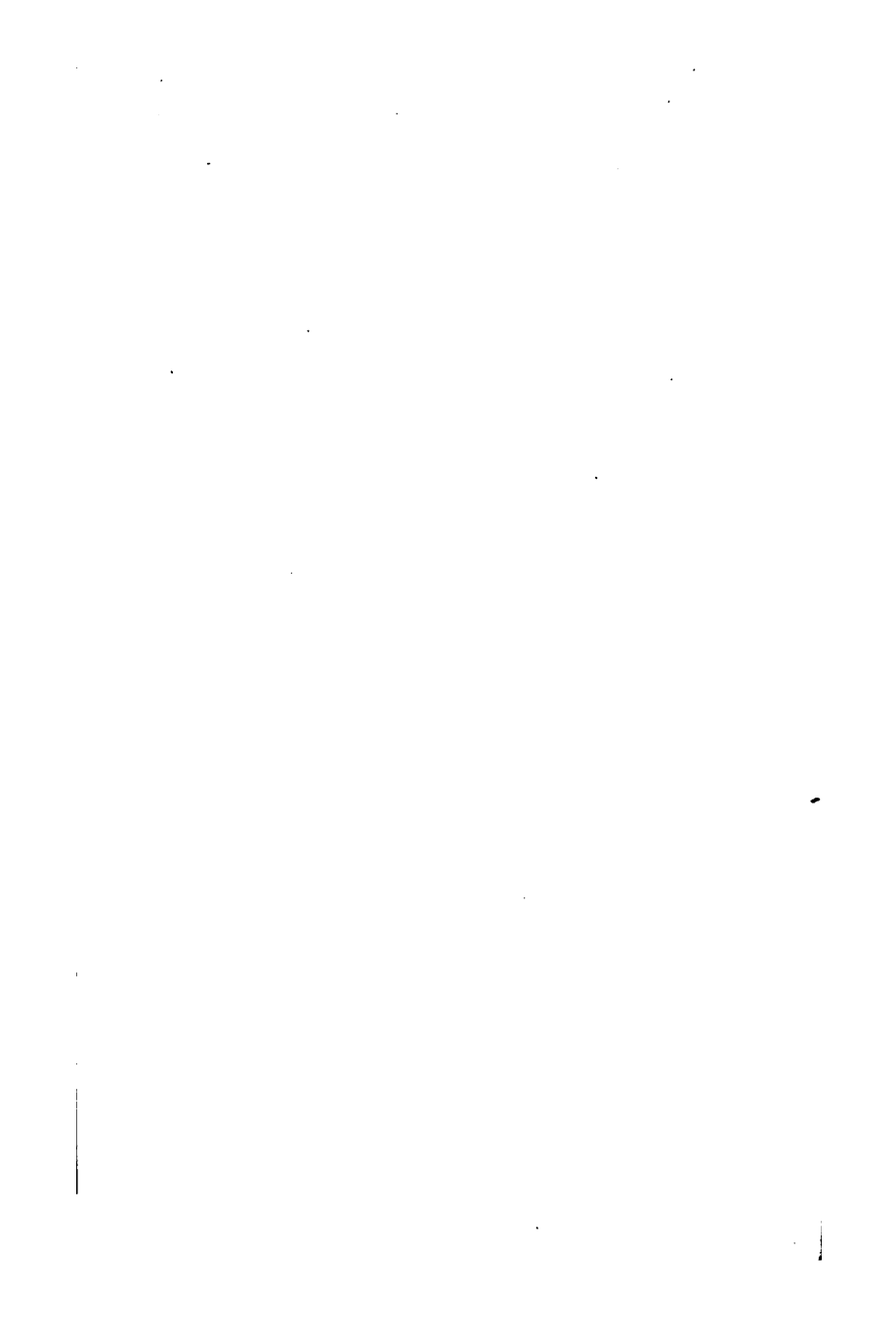
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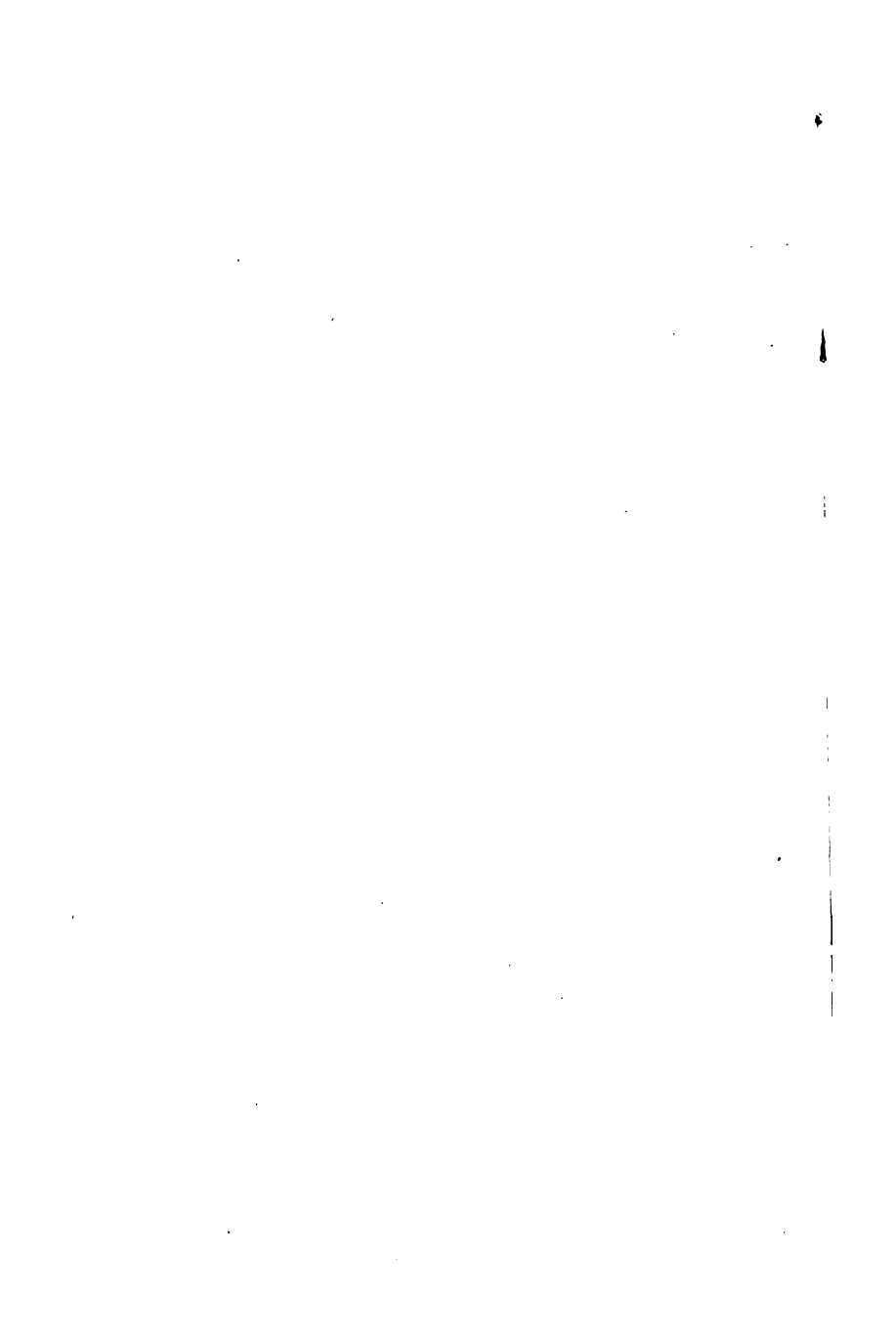




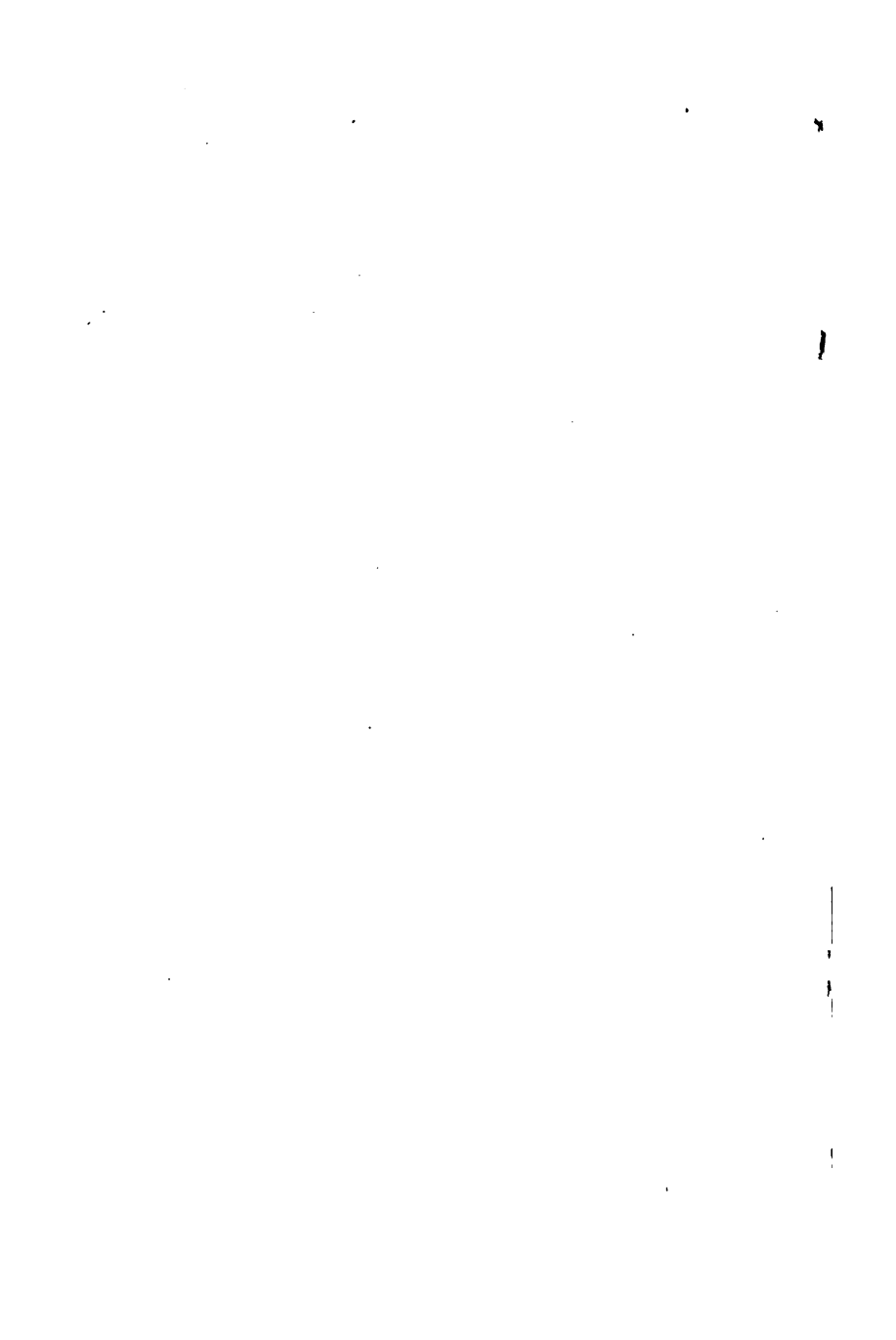
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CHRIST OF CONTENTION.



CHRIST OF CONTENTION.

THREE ESSAYS

BY

E. G. PUNCHARD, D.D. OXON.

VICAR OF CHRIST CHURCH, LUTON.

οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν . . .
οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἀγάπης . . . τί γάρ; πλὴν παντὶ τρόπῳ,
εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ, Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται·
καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω, ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι.

PHIL. i. 15-18.

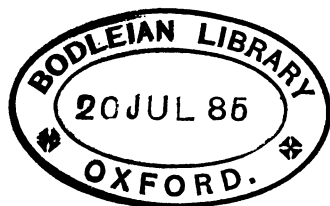
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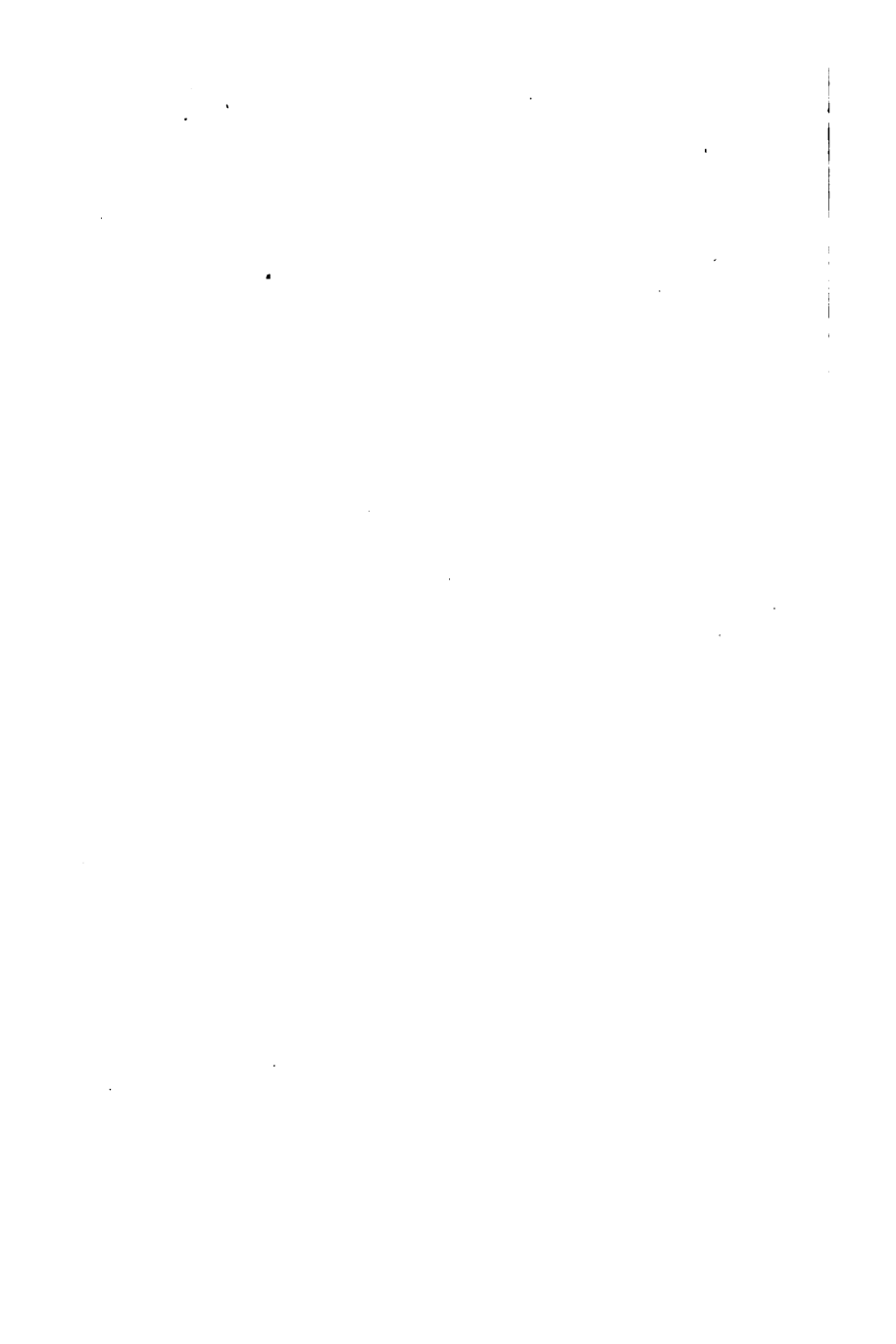
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CHRIST OF CONTENTION.



I.

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD.

I. To estimate at all adequately the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah and the Son of God, it would be necessary to understand the spirit of the age when such a claim was advanced, and, moreover, the condition of the men amongst whom it was made.

The popular mind in Judea, according to M. Renan,¹ was ready for such

¹ "Vie de Jesus," p. 248 *et seq.*

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a declaration, and not likely to be shocked at it. The doctrine of Hillel, himself the development of the best traditions of Jewry, had prepared not only the people who were to be taught, but even the new Teacher himself.¹ And further still, we have been informed by modern Rabbis that "Jesus was a Pharisee, who followed in Hillel's footsteps. . . . He never gave utterance to a single new idea."² But the effort to explain the appearance of Christ by the sequence of natural events has reached, we may think, its limit; and comparative views are failing likewise from the attention which at first they won; since their

¹ "Vie de Jesus," p. 248 *et seq.*

² Delitzsch, "Jesus and Hillel," p. 133. Quoting from Dr. Geiger's "Lectures on Judaism."

arguments appear oftentimes, on sober investigation, to have had a slender foundation in fact.¹

There seems, more happily, now on all sides a growing conviction that, to use the words of a new apologist,² "the coming of Christ was the greatest surprise of human history." . . .

¹ Notably, *e.g.*, the famous article of Emmanuel Deutsch on the Talmud (*Quarterly Review*, October 1867), in which he brought forward parallels to the teaching of our Lord. Nor could the attempt, from such a scholar, have been without guile; for many of the sayings, especially those of Rabbi Simeon, were uttered at least a century after Christ. F. Delitzsch says ("Jewish Artisan Life in the Time of Jesus," p. 29), "With the exception of Hillel, all the writers in the Talmud, whose teaching corresponds to the words of the New Testament, are of later date than Jesus and the archives of Christianity." Compare with this a writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 21, 1867, on the *Quarterly Review*, "An hypothesis that the Talmud borrows from the New Testament is very like deriving Sanskrit from Greek!" Here is a qualified critic indeed.

² Dr. Newman Smyth, "Old Faiths in New Light," p. 167.

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"The uniqueness of His person is an ultimate fact of Christianity. Whoever would deny the presence of the Divine power in human history must first reduce the character of Jesus of Nazareth to the level of the possibilities of common human nature. He is Himself the greatest of His miracles." . . . The "originality," indeed, of Jesus "appears the very moment we bring the narratives of the New Testament into juxtaposition with the known lines of previous history."¹ Evolution and the laws of heredity are wholly insufficient to "declare His generation;" and if His own explanation of Himself be rejected, there is no natural solution

Isa. liii. 8.

St. John x.
36.

¹ Dr. Newman Smyth, p. 168.

of His Being, nor of the place which He has won in the story of the world.¹ Insufficient even is the acknowledgment of Spinoza :² "Æterna sapientia sese in omnibus rebus, maxime in humana mente, omnium maxime in Christo Jesu manifestavit." "God manifest in the flesh" was more than 1 Tim. iii. 16. "the extreme expression of Divine Thought."³

The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God was not new; the incarnation of the Godhead not unfamiliar to the sages of the Captivity; but the novelty was Christ's assertion of Divine Sonship in a special and unique sense, and the "indwelling in Himself of the

¹ *Church Quarterly Review*, vol. xviii, p. 355.

² Spinoza, xxi. 4.

³ W. S. Lilly on the "Christian Revolution" in *Contemporary Review*, February 1884, p. 244.

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Divinity." This, so far from being expected by His countrymen, was in fact the ultimate cause of His accusation and death.

Certainly among the Jews were many looking for the advent of King Messiah, who, in the meanwhile, wrought out their lives in patience. And not to these alone, nor even to a few exceptional heathen, was there an expectation of deliverance. It seems to have grown up far and wide amongst men, perchance from the weariness begotten of false wisdom or foul daily life. But the eclogue of Virgil¹ was no distinct prophecy; Greek legends of the death of Pan² were even vaguer still; and the *pax*

¹ IV. Pollio.

² Plutarch, "De Orac. Defectu."

Romana which prevailed in all the West was only an accompaniment, and in no sense the cause of Christ's appearance. There were, or rather there had been, "gods many and lords 1 Cor. viii. 5. many;" every country had its own religion; almost every hill and grove its tutelar deity. Beliefs of immemorial antiquity were cherished side by side with others, the poetic fancy of comparatively yesterday: some the development of human reverence and hero-worship, others the completed mystery of a wise and interested priesthood. But to all these vagaries of tribal or national opinion the power of the Roman Empire put, in one sense, an end. All the faiths of the known world were included in her vast dominion; in her alone was a

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Pantheon, as in her alone was a consensus of all beliefs in the cultus of her emperor. The divine homage paid to him, the Cæsar, living and dead, was, in fact, the one religion which all mankind acknowledged. Outwardly, at least, there was this conformity, though for the inward devotion we may take the comment of Gibbon.¹ Philosophy, in sooth, had made a lengthy trial and a lasting failure. “The world by wisdom knew not God.” A youth of noble purpose had ended in an old age of entire unbelief. System after system had been planned in manifold arrange-

¹ “The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful.”—*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, I. ii. p. 165.

ment, more or less astute ; and now at length the whole deception was transparent. This was the case with the upper, the learned class ; and for it, when life grew harsh or wan, relief was sought in suicide. But this patrician remedy was denied to the plebeian and the slave, nor had they a religion worthy of the name. They were only tired of all things ; for them " the earth was full of darkness Ps. lxxiv. 21. and cruel habitations." The joyous life of paganism had departed, nor could the drunkenness and debauchery of its games and festivals conceal the skull beneath the mask. Licensiveness, as well as philosophy, had been tried and found utter vanity. Darker and darker is the page of history, which tells us, moreover, of

the children exposed and deserted in the streets; the poor, the sick, the aged, left without pity to perish; slavery everywhere, to the extent oftentimes of half the population. Such is the picture of the *Annus Domini*, viewed in its true light and shadows, free from the misconceptions of a spurious Renaissance. And over all there hangs a cloud of personal wickedness so strange and abhorrent, that our language, framed for the lips of men and not for *epicæni*, has no words whereby it may be named. This was the outcome of Roman wealth, Greek culture, Jewish pride, of Western force and Eastern lust; far different from that which swells the praises of nineteenth-century Agnosticism and Neo-paganism.

Cp. Rom. i.
24-32.

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD. 11

Doubtless, amid the crowd of evil Acts xiv. 17. witnesses there were real children of God, or humanity had once more come to nought; but it is only in the revolt from such a heathenism, and not as a result, direct or indirect, of its highest system, that we may account for Christianity and Christ. To deny His Godhead leaves no less a difficulty—the solitary grandeur and completeness of Jesus.¹

And if His face shine on us with a light which is not of this world, the conception of poet and painter is but the realisation of an historic fact; for “it is like itself alone,” supreme in the family of God. The laws of heredity or continuity fail to account for His appearance, and at once the

¹ Newman Smyth, *ante*, and p. 166.

simplest and profoundest elucidation
is His own :—

St. John x.
36.

“ I AM THE SON OF GOD.”

II. A technical objection, however, may be made to the strict acceptance of the term “Son of God,” on the ground that it is figurative, and not infrequent in Holy Writ.¹ It will not weaken the position of a Christian advocate to freely allow what may be gathered from such a demurrer. Adam is often called “Son of God ;” and, in even a wider reference than this to God’s universal Fatherhood, the whole race of mankind seems

¹ Nor indeed confined to Holy Writ, in either Hebrew or Christian sense of the term. But the comparative question of its use farther east, as with regard to the Vishnu *avatars*, is beyond our present limits.

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD. 13

to be thus spoken of by Isaiah:
"Doubtless Thou art our Father, Isa. lxiii. 16.
though Abraham be ignorant of us,
and Israel acknowledge us not." In
an official sense, princes and rulers of
the earth are said to be "children of
the Most High," and "gods," though
assured that they "shall die like Ps. lxxxii 6.
men." With far better intention, a
force of "*fili adoptivi*," under the new
covenant with God, the faithful are
reminded by St. John, "What man- 1 St. John
iii. 1, 2.
ner of love the Father hath bestowed
upon us, that we should be called the
sons of God."

Angels, moreover, are thus named
in the Book of Job; and if the clear Job i. 6; ii.
1.
expressions there be applied for refer-
ence to the exegesis of Gen. vi. 4,
the *Beni Elohim* cannot be considered

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as merely "righteous men." Nor may we forget the name of that dread Form beheld by Nebuchadnezzar walking with the three children in the midst of the fire ; for, if we credit the great king with the barest knowledge of Magian worship and terms, we can apprehend what he meant by the phrase "Son of God." But these are each and all instances of an indefinite¹ use of the word, as compared with its application to our Lord. His Divine Sonship differs from all other, not merely in degree, but in kind. Psalm ii. declares this in the

Dan. iii. 25.

¹ Speaking familiarly, though not quite accurately, the Scriptural phrase is either definite or indefinite, "a son" or "the son;" but the arthrous or anarthrous use of *υἱός* does not always convey its full significance; for in some cases the very absence of the articular form, as in St. John xix. 7 (*ἐαυτὸν υἱὸν θεοῦ*), defines and emphasises the statement.

most marked way ; and, strong as its witness would be if taken by itself, it is simply unanswerable when quoted with its special reference in the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts iv. 25, 26. Epistle to the Hebrews¹ catches up Heb. i. the cadence of that song, and proves, with all the drift and vigour of its own primary argument, who and what that King, that Anointed, that Son was, against whom the heathen had raged furiously and the rulers taken counsel. The little company of first believers, rejoicing at the deliverance of St. Peter and St. John from the court of the Sanhedrim, had re-

¹ The argument of Heb. i. is the Deity of Christ, and His superiority therefore to the angels—(i.) by inheritance, (ii.) by Sonship, (iii.) by adoration, (iv.) by Kingship, (v.) by eternal generation.

cognised a like interpretation of the Messianic psalm :—

“For of a truth against Thy holy Son
Jesus,
Whom Thou didst anoint,
Both Herod and Pontius Pilate,
With Gentiles and peoples of Israel,
Were gathered together.”

Acts iv. 25-
27.

Acts xiii.
31-41.

St. Paul similarly, in the sermon at Antioch in Pisidia, announced the fulfilment of God's promises, made of old to the fathers, and written for further confirmation by the Psalmist, for perpetual thanksgiving in the Temple :—“Thou art My Son ; this day have I begotten Thee.” Nor could David, to whom the prophecy had been by limitation referred, be “that Holy One who saw no corruption,” since he was dead unquestionably, and gathered to the grave. He

Ibid.

alone whom God raised up, to whose resurrection the Apostles gave witness with exceeding power, this man Acts iv. 33. was *the* Son of God.

A further argument might be based on the famous saying of St. John, St. John i. 18. ὁ μονογενης υἱός, and its alternative reading, θεός. But all this testimony, not excepting the last one, pales into nothingness compared with the direct statement of our Lord Himself, as He stood within the shadow of the Temple walls, and in the deepening solemnity of swift-coming death : " I am the Son St. John x. 36. of God ; if I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not." For, confessedly, He had wrought the works and showed the signs appointed and required. Many a cunning adventurer, with not a tithe of His fulfil-

ment, had preyed already on the hopes of an infatuated people; "another" was yet to come "in his own name," whom they would receive to their own dire confusion: surely Bar Cochba, the "son of a star," whose name the Jews changed in their bitterness to Bar Cosba, the "son of a lie." The true Star had come out of Jacob, the Son of God in His Father's name: all His faultless life bare witness to the source from whence He sprung. But the eyes of men like Rabbi Akiba were fixed on the Jewish race itself, looking for a Judaistic Messiah—such as would now be termed a natural evolution or inherited result; and precisely for this reason they failed to apprehend Him "whose goings forth had been from of old:" when

St. John v.
43.

Num. xxiv.
17.

Mic. v. 2.

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD. 19

they saw Him, "there was no beauty Isa. liii. 2.
that they should desire Him."

III. But there is supplementary evidence of a darker kind, often overlooked by the Christian apologist; and this further proof of our Lord's Divine Sonship has now to be considered—the accusation of the Jews before Pilate: "He made Himself the Son St. John xix. 7. of God."

It was the plain text of the Torah, needing neither comment nor paraphrase, "He that nameth THE NAME Lev. xxiv. 16. Cp. Sept. of the Lord shall surely be put to death." The mere claim to be "Son of God" had little or nothing in it to excite the fury of even that zealous crowd; their vehement outburst can only be explained on the supposition

that they understood His words to be nothing less than a use of the incommunicable and unutterable Name—"Before Abraham was I AM."¹

The sufferings of Babylon had rooted out from the Jewish mind all tendency to idolatry, and every thought of God beyond His eternal unity. We hear the echoes of this teaching, noble enough in itself, in the famous words of Muhammad—

"Say, God is one God, the eternal God :
He begetteth not, neither is He begotten ;
And there is not any one like unto Him."²

¹ Cp. the conclusion of C. F. Chase, "The Trial of Jesus Christ before Caiaphas and Pilate," p. 75 : "What was the precise offence they saw in Him? and what in their law did they rely upon that they should with such unanimity and with so great horror condemn Him? . . . Our Lord, before them all, declared Himself to be God. But they looked upon Him as setting up Himself as a false god ; and as seeking to draw them from, and not to God, and as attempting to seduce them into idolatry."

² Al Kuran, Sura cxii.

Israel's love of strange gods had wholly passed away, and the one great belief, the Shemà,¹

“The Lord our God is one Lord,”

at first a virtue and a safeguard, was becoming to the unhappy people, stiff-necked for good into evil, a cause of their second, if not final expatriation.

Perchance in their blinded zeal we may find one special reason for the

prayer, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Ezra

St. Luke
xxiii. 34.

had been to them “a son of God;”

Messiah was looked for of no lower rank or degree; but *the* Sonship of

God—“Whom makest Thou Thyself?”—was indeed the question of

St. John viii.
53; xix. 7.

horror and scorn. For this, if for

¹ Cp. Plumptre on St. James ii. 14, p. 70.

anything, did they spit on His face and buffet Him, scourge, mock, revile, and curse Him; for this they delivered Him up on the pretended count of treason, whilst they threatened the Roman governor with implication in a charge of *majestas*, knowing well the jealous fury of Tiberius, and the craven heart of Pilate. "They had a law, and by that law He ought to die;" but no power of death was now directly in their hands. He could not be stoned, like the blasphemers of old time, but He might be brought forth "without the camp;" the congregation could break Him "in pieces with words" instead of stones; and for the malefactor there remained a malefactor's death, the servile cross, and the curse

St. John
xix. 7; cp.
Lev. *ut*
supra.

St. John
xix. 14.

Job xix. 2.

Cp. Lev.
xxiv. 16,
Vulgate, and
Deut. xxi.
23.

of God. Scrupulously legal men, not worldlings only, were they who

"Slew the Lord,
And left their memories a world's curse."¹

IV. Startling indeed by contrast with the voices of that judgment-hall is the declaration of St. John, "Who-^{1 St. John iv. 15.}soever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." And the war-song of the Christian faith has no uncertain echo here :

Credimus in Christum Filium,
*πιστεύομεν εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.*²

Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Son of God, or else deceiver and deceived. There can be no halting-place between the two opinions ; and

¹ Tennyson, "Aylmer's Field."

² A.D. 250. Cp. Lumby, p. 132. Nicene, 325 A.D.

they who hope in modern times to rest in some vague middle term will end, like the men of old, in sorrow and confusion.

But there is left another weapon for the Christian strife with unbelief in this supreme matter—the effect of Christ's manifestation to the world. Minimised as this has been by relentless critics and profane historians, their arguments often admitted or feebly contested by orthodox divines, there yet remains so much for the impartial mind, that question may be freely made where even the morality of modern infidelity would be without the spirit of Christianity and Christ ?¹ And assuredly “the Christ

¹ Cp. the argument of C. L. Brace's “Gesta Christi,” and article on “Humane Progress under

of Christian martyrs and confessors, of preachers and evangelists, was the very and eternal Son of God ; nor was His kingdom set forward under any lighter name."

Summary.—Briefly to recapitulate:—Allowing the term "Son of God" to have been applied in a general sense to angels and men, contention has been made for its particular application to one Supreme Person, Jesus the Christ. Next it was proved that

Christianity," *Church Quarterly Review*, vol. xviii. p. 347., viz.,

I. *Roman Period.*—Effect of Christianity on *patria potestas*; marriage and personal purity; slavery.

II. *Middle Period.*—The *Treuga Dei*, and restraint of private war; foundation of hospitals and schools; relief of all distress.

III. *Modern Period.*—Emancipation of women; opposition to the struggle for wealth; the pitiless claims of science; the destructive tendencies of modern politics.

the first disciples used the phrase, with reference to Him, in its most defined and peculiar sense. Then were called in remembrance His own words and especial claim to the Sonship, eternal and divine; and the authenticity of the text quoted (St. John x. 36) being beyond question, while the credibility of its witness was sustained on many sides, conclusion followed that either He was or was not what He professed to be. If not, then inevitably He was an enthusiast, or else an impostor; but the undoubted witness of His life was in no sense obnoxious to such a charge. Further was brought forth the chief count of His indictment before Pilate, in proof that His enemies understood the surpassing dignity which He had

claimed. Lastly, there was sought a vindication of His truth, not in textual authority merely, and that of a few books more or less uncertain in date and edition, but in the wider incontrovertible evidence of Christian history, recorded now for nineteen centuries in the world.

Nor can there really be traced a development of this doctrine from some remote obscure opinion of a religion imagined and fashioned of men long before "earth-born" in the "childhood"¹ of the world; it is no "crystallisation of an idea," to be found by comparative treatment in other "faiths" of mankind, but a direct revelation from the unseen world itself. Jesus Christ "brought life and

¹ Clodd.

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2 Tim. i. 10. immortality to light¹ through the Gospel," and with Him came the assurance of His own Divine origin, and the presence of the Incarnate Word, the very Son of God.

¹ W. S. Lilly, in his article in the *Contemporary Review* for February 1884, p. 241, objects to the translation of *φωτισαυτος*, preferring the narrower reading of the Vulgate, "illuminavit."

II.

CHRIST THE MAN.

I. THE "childhood of the world"¹ is a phrase apparently harmless, though not really so when used, as of late,² for the vantage-ground in a comparative treatment of the "Childhood of Religions." Assumption has been lightly made of development, as if it were the only law of nature;³ when,

¹ Cp. Essay I., *ante*, p. 27.

² Cp. Clodd, "Childhood of the World," 1875; "Childhood of Religions," 1876.

³ The very term "Law of Nature" is itself misleading. According to John Austin in his "Principles of Jurisprudence," law implies command, duty, sanction. Observation of natural phenomena, hypo-

in point of historic fact, there is degradation often instead. "The old Aryan faith," we are told, "was an almost pure nature-religion, a worship of the powers which were seen in action around. Out of this there was slowly growing, as the result of man's thoughts about things and comparison of them with one another, a sense that underneath the *many* there was the *one*, and thus he was being led to the highest of all beliefs, that 'there is one God, and none other but He.'"¹ . . . But, if the faith of

thesis as to their cause, with induction therefrom, do not constitute a "law." At the most they represent a rule, which may be, and in experience often is, departed from—overruled? And so Mr. Lilly in an article on "Modern Mysticism" in the *Fortnightly Review* for September 1884, p. 301, "What are termed 'laws of nature' are in truth the forms of our intelligence which we apply to phenomena."

¹ Clodd, *ante*, p. 133.

the conquering race of the world were thus evolved from darkness into light, from pantheism to monotheism, evidence of it would surely be forthcoming from the earliest Aryan scriptures, the Vedas ; and they themselves must have been the stepping-stones to higher knowledge and worship. And if evolution in its strict and universal effect be contended for, the course of Hindu thought should be upward in the five centuries¹ between the last Veda and the code of Manu ; and onward still to the latest Purana of 1550 A.D. ; whereas so to state the case is at once to lay bare its absurdity. Yet, if anywhere in the world, religion of man's devising has

¹ From the fourteenth century B.C. to the ninth B.C.

had a fair field in India, where, demonstrably, its career has been downward, from simple to complex, from the Vedic worship of the one God to the hundreds of millions now enshrined in the Hindu pantheon.¹

Pure monotheism died away under the conception of eternal matter; the egg of Brahm became Brahmà—the feminine aspect of his divinity, Sarasvati; a triad of male and female gods was completed; the elements were personified as inferior deities; deified mortals changed to hero-gods; the incarnations of Vishnu supplied, in their multiform extravagance, an ever-increasing demand; heaven was con-

¹ Cp. Elphinstone's "India," book ii. chap. iv. Hardwick's "Christ and Other Masters," p. 143.

tinually brought low to earth.¹ Where, and at what time of Indian religion, has the contrary been true, and earth uplifted to heaven? ²

And as of the Aryan, so with the Semite. The faith of Abraham was not evolved from a cultus of the teraphim, neither were they an improvement of Terah on the ruder worship of his forefathers. Nor, ages later, was the faith of Islam a result

¹ Cp. Elphinstone, "India," book i. chap. iv. pp. 71-86; book ii. chap. iv. pp. 161-207. Cp. Hardwick, p. 196.

² Mr. Clodd would say (p. 171) in the "revolt" of Buddhism. But, great and noble as was Gautama Sakya Muni, the development of Buddhism, as a religion, has been downward also. Cp. p. 181 of the "Childhood of Religions" with an introduction to the "Lalita Vistara" (the eighth pre-eminently holy book of the Nepalese Buddhists), by Rajendra la la Mitra, p. 12. The foulness is beyond quotation; in anxiety to decry "matter" the most horrible impurities are sanctioned—even commanded.

of the same upward tendency, the spiritual insight of the tribe of the Koreish. True enough, from east to west, man has been in bondage *κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου*. Nature-worship and hero-worship have developed side by side ; myths obscuring knowledge floated, collected, and hardened ; religious systems have been formed and elaborated, waxen old and changed and vanished away. But it is confusion of thought, if not a beguiling of the hearts of the simple, to teach that in and through all this manifold experience, man was drawing nearer to God. Doubtless the All-Father kept His children, vagrant though they were, from stumbling helpless in the dark. "He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave

Col. ii. 8.

Rom. xvi. 18.

Acts xiv. 17, 18.

us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness;" and, "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead." But besides these mystic and symbolic testimonies came at last the fuller revelation, and the commandment to declare it to every creature. Henceforth the scattered links which held humanity to heaven were welded into one great golden chain; the angels of God were "ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Rom. i. 20

St. John i.
51; Gen.
xxviii. 12.

Nor need we shrink from and explain away the ideas of a Divine incarnation, abundant as confessedly

they are in most varied beliefs of mankind—as of Mexico, Egypt, and India. They may verily have been the fragment of an earlier and a loftier faith than any of those whereon they came as an excrescence ; or, more deeply still, the result of God's own teaching : perchance a witness to the speculation of the schoolmen that Christ would have come in the flesh, although there had been no fall of

St. John iii.
16. man. “ God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son ; ” and, in the fulness of that conception, “ Christ's presence and mission on earth will seem no more unnatural than the sunshine in the valleys does when the sun is in the sky above.”¹

¹ Newman Smyth, “ Old Faiths in New Light,” p. 259.

For "Christ is on earth the most perfect possible manifestation of what God is in heaven."¹

II. The Divine will that all men should be saved was the starting-point of St. Paul's declaration to Timothy of one God, and one *μεσίτης* between God and men, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. <sup>1 Tim. ii. 4.
Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 21.</sup>
"As sure, then," Bishop Pearson argues,² "as the first Adam, and we

¹ Newman Smyth, p. 262 *et seq.* : "The whole creation is first for Christ, who is then for the whole world. Had there been no human history of sin, so we may suppose God's love would still have finished its perfect work, and given of itself to the utmost in one in whom the creation itself is taken up to the very bosom of God; only then His advent would not have been in humiliation and shame, but in glory and honour. A gleam of light at least is thus thrown over the dark abysmal question—Why did God create at all, if creating made possible a world of sin?"

² Pearson on the Creed, p. 284.

who are redeemed, are men, so certainly is the second Adam, and our Mediator, Man. He is therefore frequently called the Son of Man, and in that nature He was always promised : first to Eve, as her seed, and consequently her son ; then to Abraham,

Gen. iii. 15 ;
Gen. xxii.
18 ; Gal. iii.
16 ; Ps.
cxxxii. 11 ;
Rom. i. 3 ;
St. Matt. i. 1.

‘ In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; ’ and that seed is Christ, and so He is the seed of Abraham ; next to David, as his son, to sit upon his throne ; and so He is made of the seed of David according to the flesh, the son of David, the son of Abraham, and consequently of the same nature with David and Abraham. And as He was their son, so are His brethren, as descending from the same father Adam ; and therefore it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.

For 'He laid not hold on the angels, Heb. ii. 16,
but on the seed of Abraham; and so
became not an angel, but a man.'"¹

Thus the very God was also very man,² subject to all the infirmities and ills of this life attending on the sons of men. He bowed Himself to a daughter of man, and was born in weakness and want. "As a root out Isa. liii. 2, 3.

¹ Pearson on the Creed, p. 284.

² The doctrine of Christ's humanity, clear enough as it is now to some who are doubtful concerning His Divinity, was not exempt from impugnors at the first, and while witnesses of it "which they had seen and handled" remained alive. The Docetæ were especially anxious not to dishonour His Deity by shrouding it supposedly in common clay. See Gibbon, "Decline and Fall," III. xxi. p. 49, and notes there 27 and 28. Ignatius of Antioch has left full witness of this great contention, *Epist. ad Trall.*, cap. ix. p. 192; *Ad Smyrn.*, cap. ii. p. 222; and cap. v. p. 224. As Pearson quaintly says, "Those plowers never doubted of the true nature of His flesh, who ploughed upon His back, and made long furrows" (p. 285). Or, to quote higher testimony still, cp. 1 St. John iv. 2, 3.

of a dry ground He had no form nor comeliness; . . . He was despised and rejected, . . . a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."¹ A ser-

St. Matt. xx.
28.

vant of servants, He came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister;"

Heb. x. 5.

to fulfil the obedience unto death, in the body which God had prepared for Him. "He gathered up all our human nature into Himself, becoming its second Head."² Not merely a Man, He "was made Man," representing all mankind in His own sinless perfection, so that reconciliation might be made through Himself for ever between those extremes of righteousness and unrighteousness for

¹ Pearson, pp. 217, 218.

² Alford, "New Testament," iii. 315, on 1 St. Tim. ii. 5.

whom He mediated. God and Man were now unalterably set at one by the Incarnate Word, He being perfect God and perfect Man. So, in the fulness of His own appointed time, the one Lord Jesus came. For "His sublime doctrine," as for His own personal revelation, "the moment had arrived." . . . "Earth has seen nothing more innocent or more powerful, more sublime or more holy, than His conversation, His life, and His death."¹

III. There are happily few men, notwithstanding the hardening process of the world, who can hear a tale of self-denial, suffering, and death, and

¹ Leopold von Ranke (S. Austin's translation), i. p. 3, s. 2.

be absolutely unmoved thereby. But of all pathetic stories, apt to touch the generous soul, what may be compared to the "Life of Jesus of Nazareth?" —From that morning when the shepherds told the people of Bethlehem that a Saviour and Prince of the house of David had been born, with

St. Luke ii. 14. "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will,"

"A marvellous song we straight did hear,
That slew our sorrow and healed our
care."¹

—From that blessed morning to the latest one in Bethany, when the risen Lord was "parted from His joyful disciples, and carried up to heaven."² Divested wholly of diviner meaning,

St. Luke
xxiv. 51.

¹ W. Morris, "The Earthly Paradise," vol. ii. p. 88.

² Liddon.

this life could own no equal. Looked at in the form only of a pure and noble man, striving for right and hating wrong, making proof of earnestness by shame and sacrifice of self, no other of the sons of men can be ranked beside it. The saintly Gautama, "the Light of Asia,"¹ fades into twilight, or, at best, the dark before the dawn. From a simply human point of view, the Galilean "carpenter, the Son of Mary," should ^{St. Mark vi. 3.} be crowned as gentlest and kingliest of human kind. "Perfect through ^{Heb. ii. 10.} suffering," none can fully count the anguish of that life, its burden of sorrow, with nothing like unto it before nor after. Would we see ^{Lam. i. 12.} Him in His infancy? The want, the

¹ Edwin Arnold.

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peril, the affliction close Him round.

In His boyhood? We are told how

soon the purpose of His mission

St. Luke ii. 49. weighed upon Him. "Wist ye not

that I must be about My Father's

business?" Do we picture Him in

gracious youth? The strength of

early manhood was spent beneath the

heavy constant toil, the labour which

alone could keep want from the door

of that straitened home. And life,

Ps. lxix. 21. narrow indeed for Him, was "full of

heaviness;" of lonely watches by the

Galilæan lake; of stormy nights upon

the windy hills; of solemn practice,

growing to unbroken habit, of most

Heb. v. 7. fervent prayer; of "supplications

with strong cryings and tears;" of

continual fastings; in certain pro-

spect of the shame before Him, the

rejection and denial—it would seem by all; in grief for His widowed mother, soon to be left sonless in the world. These were some of the human troubles which were surely Christ's before His opening message in the synagogue at Nazareth. How St. Luke iv. 16. many more and how far greater were they afterward, through weary months of homeless wandering — foodless often, and faint of heart; of thankless labour, unrequited love; of scorn, contempt, and falsehood, hatred, malice, ending only with the sleep of death. Scarcely is there a pang or passion among men which He did not actually bear, or know at least by corresponding pain. It is a relief to turn from this aspect of the Man of Sorrows to another record of Him,

in His tenderness and sympathy. Which was the prayer He answered not? whose the suffering He would not heal? Thrice-happy blind who saw His sinless face; thrice-happy deaf who heard His soft sweet voice; thrice-happy lame who leaped in sudden power to kneel again in peace. The personal influence of a noble life is great, albeit in prosaic days; what must have been His? Surely attraction quickened to affection, love, faith, trust, and worship. As with the outcast leper, as with the honoured ruler of the synagogue, as with the man born blind, as with the woman of Canaan, as with disciples in the storm-girt ship, as with them rejoicing when the grave had given back its dead, as with St. Thomas,

handling the scars of His reproachful Lord.

No wonder is it if the story of the Man Christ Jesus "made an impression so deep and abiding upon His contemporaries that it moved them, peasants and paupers as they were, to achieve the moral revolution of the civilised world."¹ Nor was it "in the unrivalled exhibition of any one form of human excellence, whether purity, or humanity, or charity, or courage, or veracity, or self-denial, or justice, or consideration for others," that the significance of our Lord's human character was best appreciated. It was in the "equal balance of all excellence, in the absence of any warping, disturbing, exaggerating in-

¹ Liddon, "Some Elements of Religion," p. 213.

fluence,"¹ such as can be discovered nowhere else in history. It combined, moreover, the strength of manhood with the tenderness of womanhood, "so as to leave no room for any additional female type that should complete the ideal of Christian humanity,"² however that were needful for the conceptions of other religions, now popularly classed with Christianity in a comparative table of mythology.

Set before us plainly in the Gospels is "an image of pure benevolence," without one failing quality, capable of exciting through all ages everywhere "the most intense affection."³ "It was no doctrine of sweet-

¹ Liddon, "Some Elements of Religion," p. 215.

² *Ibid.*, p. 216.

³ *Ibid.*

ness and light, no enthusiasm of humanity, but the person of Jesus Christ, at once human and divine, which, as they gazed upon it uplifted on the cross, smote down in masterful contrition the orthodox Pharisee and the Sadducæan materialist of decadent Judæa, the agnostic philosopher of captive Greece, the stately magistrate and the rude soldier of Imperial Rome. He it was, His head crowned with thorns, His eyes full of tears, His visage marred more than any man's, His limbs dislocated and rent, in whom tender virgins discerned the fairest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, and would have no other spouse for time or for eternity. Women whose lives were a whole pollution did but look on

Him in His ineffable sorrow, and the passion of desire was expelled by the stronger passion of compunction. Old men and little children by the vision of Him were inspired with a love stronger than death.”¹ In Him was found the sudden, the complete fulfilment of the wants of the world. The Son of Man was preached — nay, “placarded,”² according to St. Paul — and seen in all the truth, the meekness, the devotion of those two-and-thirty years. Out of every class disciples pressed to own Him God and Lord, and to cling to Him henceforward in the recollection of His dear and tender human kind. Worldlings

Gal. iii. 1.

¹ W. S. Lilly, “The Christian Revolution,” p. 245, *Contemporary Review*, February 1884.

² Bishop Lightfoot on Gal. iii. 1, *προεγράφη*.

scoffed at the "superstition" and mocked the "fanaticism;"¹ but the leaven wrought its silent way; the grain of mustard-seed grew fast into that goodly tree whose branches waved to shelter every tired and broken wing; the stone made without hands, beheld of old in the vision of the great king, smote the image of Imperial Rome and brake it in pieces, while itself "became a mountain and filled the whole earth." "The sunbeam lightened through the darkness."² "The error of idolatry vanished of itself."³ On those spots where Olympian gods were worshipped, amidst the very pillars which

St. Matt.
xiii. 31, 33.

Dan. ii. 34.

¹ Paley, "Evidences of Christianity," vol. ii, p. 35, quoting Tacitus.

² Euseb., Hist. Eccl., ii. 3. ³ St. Chrysostom.

supported their temples, arose shrines in memory of those who had scorned their worship and resisted unto death. The religion which had arisen in deserts and in prisons was embraced by the world. . . . Local deities faded and disappeared; on every highway, on the steep summits of hills, in mountain gorges and valleys, on the housetops and on the tessellated floors, the cross was seen. The victory was decisive and complete, the worship and the name of Christ stood triumphant over prostrate heathenism."¹ . . . "Christianity thrown to the beasts of the arena gained the throne of Cæsar himself."² The Man Christ Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, whom His brethren "slew and

¹ Ranke, *ibid.*, p. 5.² Teignmouth Shore.

hanged on a tree," was in very deed Acts x. 39.
uplifted from the earth to draw all St. John xii. 32.
men unto Him.

Conclusion.—"The Word was made St. John i. 14.
flesh, and dwelt among us." The
reality of that presence is amply tes-
tified, but the mystery of the Incar-
nation remains. And it were better
left in more reverent stillness than the
eager curiousness of modern Chris-
tianity seems to demand. The term
and time of Christ's tabernacling with
us are recorded beyond all reasonable
doubt; what it wrought for healing
in the world, how by it came afresh
the benediction of God, how from it
comes hereafter the enthronement of
man, remain mysterious still.¹ But

¹ Benson's "Benedictus Dominus," pp. 3-7.

this at least we know : all was in strict conformity with God's eternal law. In the ages past we found no proof of an advance to God, as from humanity unknowing and unknown to some divinity who might be searched out and learned. "Not the wisdom of this world," nor of the unseen powers¹ to whom it was committed, but the wisdom of God, alone revealed Himself ; and even that revelation was "hidden " till the appointed time.

1 Cor. ii. 6.
Cp. St. Luke
iv. 6.
St. John
xiv. 30.

Degradation and defeat—not development—are seen to wait upon all human effort wrought by man alone. Bondage through sin—implanted, inherited, or personally caused ; a real slavery of device and system ; and a hopelessness through all. The highest

¹ οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων.

tendency of a humane religion—surely the faith of Buddha, itself a protest against an accumulating creed of sacrifice and legal obligation, has fallen low indeed: its hope absorption, its desire extinction.¹

¹ Not unfrequently of late there have been efforts, on the part of some writers, to lessen the significance of the term *Nirvana*. Mr. Rhys Davids says, ("Buddhism," p. 111), "It is the extinction of that sinful grasping condition of mind and heart which would otherwise . . . be the cause of renewed individual existence." And Professor Max Müller equally opposes the idea of annihilation, as conveyed by the mystic syllables. But even Buddhist apologists admit Nirvana to be the commencement of dissolution; their chief good is "the extinction of sin," and, when the disciple has gained this blissful state, he is "no longer alive or existent in any sense at all," and soon will have reached extinction so complete that it will be "in one word, death." Thus then "*Nirvana*" comes to be at least the beginning of the end, though we are not allowed to call it what, after all, it really means, namely, non-existence and nothingness; for the only difference between *Nirvana* and *Parinibbana* is of degree, and not of kind. (See further an article in "Mission Life" on "The Religions of India—Buddhism," by the present writer: April 1880, pp. 164-170.)

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“Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?”¹

¹ Tim. iii.
16.

But for the new despair, as for the old, “God manifest in the flesh” is the one sovereign cure. The deadness of humanity is quickened with the life in Christ, whose body in our midst was “as a coal red with fire” in the ashes grey and cold. And in the person of the God-Man remains the hope of mankind: “made flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, and blood of our blood, . . . able to call us in the truest sense, His brethren.”²

“Then, though our foul and limitless trans-
gression
Grows with our growing, with our breath
began,
Raise Thou the arms of endless interces-
sion,
Jesu, divinest when Thou most art
MAN.”³

¹ Tennyson, “Two Voices.”

² W. S. Lilly, *ante*, p. 257.

³ F. W. H. Myers, “St. Paul.”

III.

CHRIST THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR.

I. DOUBT in the minds of some men is so far the natural result of their own love of truth and wistful inquiry after it, that its presence in the world, at least in the world as now constituted, can hardly be called an evil.¹

¹ To the question "How far does philosophical scepticism necessitate or conduce to a belief in matters of religion?" a very striking answer is given in "A Discourse on Truth," by Richard Shute, p. 296: "There is one form of religion, and one only, which philosophical scepticism would sweep to the winds—that which pretends to be purely rational, to found itself entirely upon reason, and to make no demand upon that faith which is the evidence of things not seen. The doctrines of religion, since they are not certainly given in experience, must be either to be evolved by reason from experience, or must be given

It acts indeed often as a stimulus to a healthier action in the hearts of believers; so that faith itself, which might otherwise be degraded into the bare expression of opinion,¹ is purified from abuses and quickened into nobler life. In the words of Bishop Wilberforce, "It is not well to think that all doubt is sinful; some minds, perhaps the deepest, must be visited by it. It is a correlative of their greater

to some other faculty of mind or soul, in a fashion which transcends all reason. To the first of these two theories philosophical scepticism returns an unhesitating negative, but when the second is stated she humbly bows her head, and presumes not to judge beyond her province."

¹ Faith is not mere opinion concerning a tradition, nor assent to its credibility, but a belief, the root and sustenance whereof are in the liveliest affections of the soul. Cp. Pearson, pp. 4-11.

Knowledge of Christ is not the wearisome reiteration of His name, nor the frequent protestation of a creed, but a personal devotion, like that which held St. Paul (2 St. Tim. i. 12).

expanse that the very breath of heaven, as it sweeps over them, should break their calm into the uneasiness of a troubled swell."¹

When objections are urged against the Christian faith and its central truth — a suffering Saviour — from grounds at all akin to these they must be, and indeed for the most part are, quietly received and prayerfully considered; those who make them, it is felt, may not be "far from the kingdom of God." St. Mark
xii. 34.

But this class of conscientious opponents is a small one amid a host of assailants gathered from all quarters of contention. Doubt, amid the majority of people, springs from evil, and is effective only for mischief.

¹ "Essays," vol. i. p. 212.

Too careless to weigh a matter which concerns the remote future ; incapable often of apprehending the issues of the conflict, eager to grasp any weapon wherewith a religion, which makes unwelcome demands upon the life may be thwarted and gainsaid, men of the world catch up and repeat any difficulty or reproach. And of all examples of vicious unbelief, few if any can be compared with the Jews' denial of Christ on Calvary. Their doubts, begotten of hatred and malice, had so far deepened into full conviction, that no words except those of cruel mockery and insult could adequately express them. But strangely enough, commingled with the falsehood of the charge there was a truth unawares ; and it is in this double aspect of their

THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR. 61

recorded saying that Christianity can see an exact definition of her Founder's work—"He could save others"—but "Himself He could not save."

St. Matt.
xxvii. 42;
St. Mark
xv. 31.

1. Obviously, the first clause of that Hebrew sarcasm was no admission of good deeds, nor allowance of partial belief in them. The Victim hanging there upon the tree—Himself and it a curse—recalled no kindly memories, bestirred no pity in the hearts of the beholders. A contagion of national hate possessed alike the rabble and the religionists who surged around. They meant not thus far what they said; it were better so to accept their words, for then, in a manner, they may be excused. Their next voice would exclaim only worse condemnation of themselves if the

Cp. Deut.
xxi. 23; Gal.
iii. 13.

first one had declared a truth. Satire bitter and hard it surely was, spring-
 Heb. iii. 12. ing from evil hearts, full of unbelief.

It meant that His works were chicanery and fraud, His words hypocrisy ; or else that the whole intolerably blameless life had been one great delusion. Either way they rejoiced at its failure. Their own levels of riot and bloodshed, or of craft and wrong, were to be seen no more in an unbearable reality beside the incarnate truth and purity which towered above them, though exalted now in shame and to death. The world should once again go on its courses unproved. It, with the wisdom of experience, had preferred its own ways, and taught its children to delight in them ; these were living free and unharmed ; while He, the

St. Mark
 xv. 7.

censor of its pleasures, was dying in confusion. "He saved others," . . . nay, this had been one of the sources of His imposition. Foolish folk, Galileans and peasants chiefly, had fancied miracles of healing; all these at last were evidently disproved. So strange had they seemed awhile ago, that Satan himself was charged with collusion; but now that mistake was confessed, the whole error manifest; the calm, clear air of a Roman court had been too fine for such pretensions: strong common sense had vanquished enthusiasm.

St. Matt.
ix. 34.

2. And what was the cause of the taunt which followed—"Himself He cannot save,"—how far was it false or true? To comprehend it fully there would be need of sympathy with the

Jews in their "difficulties of belief." If for a moment, and for contradiction's sake, it may be imagined that our Lord was, as they supposed Him, simply and only man, He might surely have escaped the cross? In ordinary prudence He would have done so. His friends had long ago foreseen the inevitable end of His collision with the ruling powers; they even attempted forcibly to control His efforts: "they went out to lay hold on Him." They said He was "mad" indeed; and unbelievers of the present day have charged Him, in like manner, with dreaming "the maddest and sweetest of dreams;"¹ but the consent of all who heard, as of those moreover who judged and condemned

St. Mark
iii. 21.

¹ J. T. Nettleship, "Essays on Browning," p. 266.

Him, was repugnant to that idea ; nor can its latest resuscitation be more than a covert and unworthy sneer. In the evidence of friends and foes, He calmly and deliberately met His fate. The argument therefore, the lower human one of which advantage may be made, is that He need not • have acted as He did : His strength had been only "to sit still." A Na- Isa. xxx. 7.zarene carpenter, if that alone, was far too obscure for persecution either by the rulers or the governor. The assumption of His accusers turns against themselves ; the untruth and the baseness of their gibe destroyed its edge.

But, fairly it may be asked on behalf of the Jews, how far ought they to have held what is practically the

Christian faith,—namely, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah? What were the witnesses which should have convinced them? Assuredly none other than the testimony which had been given to the inquiring disciples

St. Matt. xi.
5. of John the Baptist,—

“The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk;

“The lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear;

“The dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”

From the time of Isaiah, the hope of Christ, “which had before prevailed but vaguely and indistinctly, had been enlarged, and arrayed in the most splendid images.”¹ Since the return from Babylon the people had been knit together by the one hope of

¹ Milman, “History of the Jews,” i., 424, *et seq.*

His advent. The "dangerous curiosity" which tried "to penetrate the secrets of futurity" concerning Him was condemned by the synagogues continually and in vain;¹ for the special marks of the coming of the Holy One had been set forth in three distinct passages, and the knowledge of them was in all Jewry.

Isa. xxix. 18;
xxxv. 4-6;
xlii. 7.

Reference was made to open facts when our Lord answered His questioners, and few, if any, could have been unfamiliar with the great prophecy of Israel's restoration: probably the exact texts of Isaiah, to

¹ "Cursed is he who calculates the time of Messiah's coming."—Milman, "History of the Jews," iii. 359. Hence the famous saying of R. Jochanan to Akiba: "The grass will spring from thy jawbone, and yet the Son of David will not have come."—Ibid., ii. 428.

which He alluded, were instantly recalled by His hearers. They silently admitted His claim to the miracles which had been wrought and observed in their midst, nor could the force of such a testimony be turned aside. Conviction ought to have followed, and would indeed but for the listeners themselves. They hardened themselves against the witness, and

St. John xii.
40. God permitted them, nay urged them,

delighting so to do. In such a frame of mind men will not be persuaded,
“ though one rose from the dead.”

St. Luke
xvi. 31.

II. But it is contended that, under all the falsehood of this gibe, there lurked a great truth unperceived—
“ He saved others ; Himself He could not save.” St. Matthew tells us of

a strange reason,¹ supported by an equally unexpected quotation from the Old Testament, in fulfilment of which the Saviour went about His pitying work, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." Nor is it difficult to see by analogy that "every day of His earthly life was a coming under, upon His part, those evils which He removed from others. For that which is the law of all true helping, namely, that the burden which you would lift you must yourself stoop and come under, the grief which you would console you must yourself feel with; a law which we witness to, as often as we use the words sympathy and compassion, was

St. Matt.
viii. 17.

¹ "That it might be fulfilled," &c.,—*i.e.*, Isa. liii. 4.

truest of all in Him upon whom the help of all was laid."¹ By the very suffering of His body He assuaged ours. And "not in this single aspect of His life, namely, that He was a healer of sickness, were these words fulfilled, but rather in the life itself, which brought Him in contact with the thousand forms of want and woe, of discord in man's outer life, of discord in man's inner being;"² though above all the strict fulfilment of this Scripture would seem to have been in death, when "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." Every one of our offences and ignorances, and every one of our pains, "as a

¹ St. Peter
ii. 24.

¹ Trench on the "Miracles," p. 240, 241. Quoting S. Hilary.

² *Ibid.*, p. 241.

real consequence of sin, and at every moment contemplated by Him as such, pressed with a living pang into the holy soul of the Lord." ¹ He bore them "as He bore that mortal suffering life, in which alone He could bring them to an end, and finally swallow up death and all that led to death in victory." ²

And in so far as He had determined thus to work out the salvation of the world, He could and did "save others," but "Himself He could not save." Marvellous inability born of deepest love ; God's power lying willingly dormant in Him, the Son of Man, exposed to the horror and derision of Golgotha. This was the un-

¹ Trench on the "Miracles," p. 241.

² Ibid., p. 241.

willing truth which lay concealed beneath the accusation of failure. The Psalmist's words of wonder before God were realised in fulness unforeseen :—

Ps. lxxvi. 10. "The wrath of man shall praise Thee."

The fury of the charge was spent in vain, and that which seemed to reach the summit of triumphant hate and scorn, becomes a text which angels might declaim and earth receive with joy. The mystery of the atonement is, in part at least, declared, and the long line of unwilling victims is seen to be the type of that One wholly willing, bound only by the inevitable law of His own being and obedience. From Samuel, in his indignant question to Saul, to the last words of the nameless messenger of God, it was

1 Sam. xv.
22.

Malachi iii.
3.

the offering of righteousness that was required, and not the mere death of innocent brutes; but the incomplete-^{Heb. x. 11-14.}ness of their sacrifice was now fulfilled, their very cry of anguish may have been appeased¹ in the sufferings of One all-knowing and self-giving, and in that dread fulfilment were for ever set aside. What need of artificial light in the splendour of the morning sun?

(2.) Nor was the doctrine of vicarious punishment confined to the Hebrews, and told to them solely by revelation. "Without shedding of

¹ Cf. Rom. viii. 19-22. The stretching forward of the neck (*ἀποκαρδοκία*) as for refreshment and deliverance, on the part of all created things, bound in a common lot of suffering, points to the Redeemer; and onward still—*εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ*. But cf. J. Hinton's "Mystery of Pain" for a very opposite idea.

Heb. ix. 22. blood is no remission," might be called the substance of almost every early religion ; and, in its lowest idea of propitiating a vindictive God, may be found as a world-wide superstition. But the Israelites knew, or should have known, their ritual to be only representative of the perfect body broken in due time.¹ Even where it resembled that of the surrounding heathen, the greatest care was taken to show an entire distinction between them. Baal and Chemosh might have deluded followers who believed in the real efficacy of slaughtered beasts : Jehovah willed not to be worshipped in such degrading terms. Thus much, however, can be seen—that a doctrine of suffer-

¹ Cf. Mozley's "University Sermons," No. VIII.

ing and reconciliation was universal, though accepted for the most part from a false ground of view. Bishop Butler has shown how "the whole analogy of nature¹ removes all imagined presumption against the general notion of a "Mediator between God 1 Tim. ii. 5. and man;" . . . "for we find all living creatures are brought into this world, and their life in infancy is preserved, by the instrumentality of others, and every satisfaction of it some way or other is bestowed by the like means." . . . "We find by experience that God does appoint mediators to be the instruments of good and evil to us, the instruments of His justice and mercy." . . . "People ruin their fortunes by ex-

¹ "Analogy," II., v. 1-166 (p. 205, Oxford edition).

travagance; they bring disease upon themselves by excess; they incur the penalties of civil laws. . . . Will sorrow for these follies past, and behaving well for the future, alone and of itself, prevent the natural consequences of them? On the contrary, men's natural abilities of helping themselves are often impaired, or, if not, yet they are forced to be beholden to the assistance of others upon several accounts and in different ways—assistance which they would have had no occasion for, had it not been for their misconduct, but which, in the disadvantageous condition they have reduced themselves to, is absolutely necessary to their recovery and retrieving their affairs.”¹

¹ “*Analogy*,” II., v. iv. p. 171.

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There is indeed no "sort of objection from the light of nature" against the doctrine of mediatorial suffering; rather it is the case that men everywhere have sought to follow it, frequently by bloody paths; and, in the view of the Christian, all these lead, in their dim aspiration, to Calvary, and the Lamb without spot "slain ^{1 John xvii. 24; Rev. xiii.} from the foundation of the world." ^{8.}

For "a sacrifice of mere substitution professes to act upon the principle of a literal fulfilment of justice.¹ . . . It is true the sin is committed by one, and the punishment is inflicted upon another; but there is sin, and there is punishment on account of sin, which is considered a sort of literal fulfilment of justice. But a

¹ Mozley, Sermon VIII. p. 168.

voluntary sacrifice does not act upon the principle of a mock literal fulfilment of justice, but upon another and totally different principle. Its effect proceeds not from the substitution of one person for another in punishment, but from the influence of one person upon another for mercy—a mediator upon one who is mediated with.”¹

Wisdom xi.
26.

God, the Father of all men, the Lord of life and lover of souls, could never possibly “be appeased by a struggling victim, dragged up in horror and agony, to be a sacrifice for sin against his will, recoiling at every step from the purpose to which he was devoted.”² No unwilling sacrifice for sin “could ever possibly *be* a

¹ Mozley, Sermon VIII., p. 168.

² Ibid., p. 178.

sacrifice for sin.”¹ Such an idea “was totally and for ever extinguished by the Gospel idea, when it was revealed that love was of the very essence of sacrifice, and that there could not *be* sacrifice without will.”²

And this doctrine of the atonement is that which “most of all comes into collision with, and declares most inextinguishable war with, material ideas of the Deity.”³

The only necessity laid upon the Saviour was that of suffering Himself, in the relief which He procured for mankind. And as all things for amendment were foreseen and ordered by Him, even before the act

¹ Mozley, Sermon VIII., p. 166.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 178.

of sin which was their first direful cause, so even the affliction, bound up with and inseparable from the act of mediation and restitution, was undertaken freely by Him, who had power over His own divine life "to lay it down" and "to take it again."

St. John x.
18.

St. John x.
17.

Therefore did the Father love Him ; not merely as the Incarnate God, but as the Man Christ Jesus. And, for a like reason, His brethren whom He redeemed, His own "peculium"¹ and

¹ Cf. 1 Peter ii. 19. *λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν* now feebly if correctly rendered "a people for God's own possession" by the revisers of the New Testament, is more suggestively translated "a peculiar people" by the Authorised Version. The Imperial Constitutions gave to *filiis familiarum* full power over whatever they acquired in actual service of war, the "pecus" which they won—the *castrense peculium* ; and the right of testatorship concerning this, as against the *patria potestas*. Just. Ins. lib. ii., tit. xii. No commentator seems to have noticed the wonder-

spoil of war in the great contest with the enemy of men, can find no worthier praise than the unbelieving taunt of Calvary: "He saved others; Himself He could not save."

St. Mark
xv. 31.

III. *Conclusion.* — (I.) Under the "guidance of legitimate principles" we are assured by the authors of the "Unseen Universe,"¹ "science, instead of appearing antagonistic to the claims of Christianity, is in reality its most efficient supporter." The possibility of living beings in this world, of greater intelligence than our own,

ful fitness of the English word in describing the new possession of Christ, gained by Him in the spoiling of Satan. Cf., *e.g.*, Alford, Wordsworth, Ellicott. The latter (Mason) confusing *castrense peculium* with *quasi castrense peculium*.

¹ "The Unseen Universe" (Tait and Stewart), p. 209.

does not involve any breach of continuity in what appears to us to be the laws of the universe.¹ The will of man is accomplished in conformity therein ; but the will of God constitutes in itself the eternal source from whence that order came.² Nor is the supernatural of necessity contrary to nature. The possibility of a divine presence cannot therefore be scientifically rejected.

(2.) The incarnation of Christ, the manifestation of God in the person of Jesus, has been declared in a manner beyond all criticism, and outside the field of mere negation ; while the figure of the historic Christ is incon-

¹ "The Unseen Universe" (Tait and Stewart), p. 190.

² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

ceivable, except His light were the
“dayspring from on high.”

St. Luke i.
78.

(3.) Nor, from a natural point of view, can the tale of His affliction be denied; the Man of Sorrows, representative of all mankind, was the son of the Mater Dolorosa, the seed of the woman ordained to bruise the serpent's head; but, in the bruising of Himself, foredoomed to suffer. Gen. iii. 15.

Christ, Very God, Very Man and Saviour of Men, the Maker and Master of all, was amongst us “as He that serveth.” Though He were God and Lord,—being in the form, not the appearance only, but the verity of God, He made not His equality a thing to be grasped at for ever, and entirely insisted on as of some prize of war—nay, but He emptied Himself

St. Luke
xxii. 27.

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of His Godhead, and made Himself of
no reputation, and took upon Him the
form of a slave, and was made in the
Phil. ii. 6-8. likeness of men, and being found in
fashion as a man,—still further depth
of wondrous love : “ He humbled
Himself and became obedient unto
Phil. ii. 6-8. death, even the death of the Cross.”¹
Then—

“Through life, death, through sorrow and
through sinning,
He shall suffice us, for He hath sufficed ;
Christ is the end, for Christ was the be-
ginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is
Christ.”²

¹ Cf. Lightfoot, *in loco*, p. 108-111.

² Myer's “ St. Paul,”

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